

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Niles Police Department

Personal Experience

O H 944

JAMES YOULL

Interviewed

by

Stephan Papalas

on

December 5, 1982

P This is an interview with Jim A Youll for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on Niles Police Department, by Stephan Papalas, on December 5, 1982, at 104 Wood Street, at 7 40 p m

Mr Youll, can you tell me anything about your parents? What were their names? Why did they come to Niles? Where did they live?

Y I can tell you about my dad first He came from Italy He was born and raised in Italy. When first coming here, he settled in New York City I think he was there for about five or six years He had a small business there. Later he came to Niles I suppose some friends had recommended Niles to him. There were a lot of jobs available here.

P What year did he come to Niles?

Y. I think approximately about 1888 he settled in New York and then came to Niles perhaps in 1892

P Where did he work?

Y In New York City or in Niles?

P In Niles

Y In Niles he first started with the Erie Railroad and then transferred to the blast furnace which is located near the Erie Station Then he went to the Niles Firebrick Company He worked there for a period of about 30 years

P Where were you born at?

Y I was born in Niles, Ohio

P What street?

Y Mason Street The corner of Mason and Wood

P About what year were you born?

Y 1905.

P How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Y I had five brothers besides myself and five sisters

- P That was a big family.
- Y With myself, it would be 11 That is five in addition to me We were six boys and five girls That was a family of 11
- P When you were young and growing up, what did you and some of your brothers and sisters do? What are some of your earliest recollections on Mason Street?
- Y In those days, there was not too much activity We had no playgrounds We just gathered together depending on the weather If it was good weather, we played outdoors. We created our own games
- P What kind of games?
- Y We played baseball, hockey in the street, football and all of the usual sports In the wintertime, we spent our evenings indoors It was mostly family nights We all stayed together It was early to bed and early to rise.
- P What about school? What do you remember about school?
- Y Do you mean grade school or high school?
- P High school
- Y I went to Niles McKinley High School I took the classical course there Are there any points of interest that you want mentioned?
- P I would like to know what classes you like best, who were some of your school teachers?
- Y Classes or studies? The classes I liked them all whether I was freshman or a senior. Studies I enjoyed sciences and mathematics
- P Who was your favorite teachers?
- Y I had several of them I could name a few I liked my Latin teacher in Youngstown She later went on to teach at South High School in Youngstown Mr Craig in Chemistry He was a very good teacher I could name many of them. I do not know how many you want me to name

- P. That is fine. What about sports?
- Y I was not too active in high school. I did engage in a little baseball, but I did not engage in too many sports in high school. I did after I came out of high school.
- P Who were some of your friends in high school?
- Y That I chummed around with?
- P Right.
- Y George Nelson Brutz, Joe Bassett, Joe Trimbue, Jim Ravella, who is present Judge Ravella. I could go on and name a good many of them, but those are the ones who I mostly chummed around with. We stayed together and were closer.
- P When you were in your senior year of high school, what did you do on a typical Saturday night? Where did you go?
- Y We did not go much of anywhere. We were lucky if we had a dime for a movie on Saturday night. On Saturdays we probably spent our time selling junk, selling newspapers and carrying sawdust to the grocery store. They laid sawdust on the floor on those days. We perhaps made a few nickels and dimes. If we did, then we would go to a show or we stayed home. That was our Saturday night.
- P. What did you do during the day?
- Y. That was what we did during the day. If we did not do that, we played games and worked around the house. We had to chop wood and saw wood. We had to take care of many household chores. Those came first.
- P Where did you sell your newspapers? Downtown or in your neighborhood?
- Y. Downtown. We went from door to door to the business establishments. That is where we sold our newspaper. It was either on a street corner or we walked in if they permitted us to. We stood on the street corner.
- P What year did you graduate from high school?
- Y 1923.

P In 1923, Mr Youll, what would a typical day on Main Street be like? What would it look like downtown? What can you remember about it?

Y There were very few automobiles We had them, but some were parked on the street On Main Street we had a lot of people in those days, particularly on weekend night, Friday and Saturday nights It was very congested in fact You made acquaintances or saw friends and got together It was really a great night downtown, Saturday night downtown was something to remember

P: What could you do downtown?

Y: We went to the old ice cream parlor We talked on the street corner If you were old enough you went to the poolroom and played pool and billiards That was about all You could go and see a movie

P What were the movie houses like?

Y We had beautiful movie houses We had the Warner Theater on State Street The Butler Theater was on Main Street. The Stafford was a little more older and obsolete, but it still existed In the late 1920's we had the McKinley Theater That is where the Sparkle Market is today

P What did you do after you graduated from high school?

Y After I graduated from high school, I had no finances My parents could not afford to send me to college, so I had to find a way to raise money I had to go to work. I went to work at the Niles Firebrick Company. In the summertime I worked in Republic Steel as an extra man in the hot mill Finally I got a job in Niles Steel Products as a timekeeper I raised enough finances to get me started in college I went away to college in 1926

P What was working at the Firebrick Company like?

Y They had two plants The number one plant along side of Langley Street opposite the Erie Station which is no longer there. That was the plant number one which was the original plant They made clay firebrick there The number two plant was on where the city bought the property now

P Behind Central Park or near it?

Y. Where Dr Thomas' office is Dr. Williams rather

- P Along East Park
- Y That was the newer office of the Niles Firebrick Company The plant was over and beyond that That was a larger plant The number two plant was the larger plant It was by the Thomas' who originally owned it
- P Which plant did you work at?
- Y I worked in the number one plant
- P What was it like in there?
- Y Occasionally they would send me to the number two plant if the number one plant would shut down I just worked there for a sort period of time. It was not too long
- P Did you like it?
- Y There were no boys' jobs in the Niles Firebrick Company Every job was a man-sized job You had to work There were no boy's jobs It was very, very difficult You worked eight hours You worked ten hours You worked just like a man There was no room for kids I worked on summer vacation when I was only 16 or 17 years old After school, you worked just like a man There were no boys' jobs
- P Was the pay good?
- Y I started at \$ 30 an hour and graduated up to \$ 42 an hour I used to get \$4 20 for ten hours pay
- P What was the management like? Did they take advantage of the workers?
- Y We had no benefits If you want to call that taking advantage of somebody There were no benefits whatsoever If you were sick, you had no sick leave or benefits for being sick You had to be on the job if you wanted to get paid It was harsh I do not think they showed too much sympathy for the workers You had some that were very reasonable with you. It was severe
- P What college did you go to?
- Y I went to Ohio Northern University

P. You graduated as a pharmacist

Y I graduated as a pharmacist.

P Where did you work?

Y Before I left, did I tell you about the Niles Steel Products?

P No, you did not What was it like?

Y I worked there longer than I did any other place Steel Products was a very nice place to work It was very dangerous It was all automatic presses I started there as a press operator and then later became a time keeper It was very interesting work We made parts for automobiles, body parts such as Chevrolet, Hudson, Ford, and even parts for stoves and washing machines It was very interesting work You made so many different parts that you knew about It was very dangerous. The presses did not have many safety things as they should have

P After college you were a pharmacist. Where did you go?

Y After I graduated from Pharmacy college I took the state board You had to pass the state board. I came out in the Depression I faced the Depression There were no jobs available no matter how hard you tried I went here and there, Youngstown and Akron, but there were no jobs available whatsoever I drove a taxi cab for a year

P Where at?

Y In Niles. I drove a taxi cab for one year from six in the evening until six in the morning

P Did you ever have any interesting experiences as a cab driver?

Y You hauled around some very, very nice people that you took from place to place. Then you had some very dangerous characters too You knew how to handle and cope with them

P What kind of dangerous characters?

Y They were drunks and unruly people like that, but I was never held up I never had to worry about anything in that respect They were mostly people who were drunk and intoxicated I never faced one that tried to

harm me I think I face more dangers in a drugstore than I did in a cab

P That was about 1931 that you drove a cab?

Y It was 1931 I worked a year in Salem My first job was in Salem, Ohio.

P. As a pharmacist?

Y. As a pharmacist That is right

P Where from there?

Y From there I came back home to Niles to work in Ferguson's Drugstore on State Street I told you where it was located It is where the present city administration building is now.

P That is the safety complex?

Y That is right It is called the Safety Complex, Niles Fire

P Ferguson, of course, later became mayor

Y Later that same year he became mayor He was mayor of the city. I worked there for about four or five years

P Up to about 1937?

Y To about 1937

P What did you do then?

Y I went to Girard, Ohio I worked in a pharmacy in Girard, Ohio It was State Drug and Pharmacy I worked there one year Then I went from Girard to Warren. In 1939 I worked there as a pharmacist until my full retirement in 1975

P What drugstore was that?

Y The original name of the drugstore was McGar We called it apothecary which is the same as a drugstore. My partner and I later purchased it after Mr. McGar passed away We operated for a number of years until my partner passed away I operated alone for a period of time.

P What did you name the drugstore?

Y McGar Apothecary was the original name I gave you that name there I sold out in 1966 to Franklins It was Franklin Pharmacy It is doing business today on Youngstown Road It is still there. I worked there occasionally part-time

P I want to ask you about an incident in 1924 It was the Ku Klux Klan riot in Niles

Y I cannot remember some of that I was just a boy, but I have some recollections of that

P How old were you then?

Y I was 18

P What was the mood in Niles about the Klan wanting to come in? What did people feel at that time? First of all, there were a number of times that the Klan tried to come into Niles

Y Yes, they had attempted to come in

P There were a number of incidents

Y That is right

P Can you remember any of these incidents before the riot?

Y Yes I can remember some When the Klan first operated, they came in with good intentions. Then they wanted to hold some parades which they did downtown Their demonstrations were not too favorable They seemed to antagonize people more than anything Then they started to burn crosses They burned several in Central Park I can even remember when they burned them in our own neighborhood here

P On Mason Street?

Y Right down the street on Mason Street

P Where at did they burn them on Mason Street?

Y Right behind Denny's. I think it is one of those lots I do not know which

lot it was I do not remember it

P Do you remember the date that they had burned the cross?

Y They burned them several times It was not only one time There were many times that they did burn the cross It was more than once

P. Why did they pick behind Denny's? Was there a reason for that location?

Y That I do not know When they met for the neighborhood, I do not know. I could not say, Steve They even burned them in the mill I worked that summer vacation in Republic Mill and they burned crosses right in the mill out on the floor inside of the mill

P Why? Because the immigrants worked there?

Y I do not know I suppose

P What else do you remember before the riot?

Y I can remember one incident in Central Park One of the boys had come home from the Navy on furlough They took this boy and put him up on the stand and tried to make an example of him I guess We did not stick around too long The boy had an American Uniform on We did not think that was right either

P What did they make him do up there?

Y I do not know We did not stay, Steve We did not stay

P. During that demonstration, which I believe it was in June of 1924, why did the Klan have the demonstration? What do you remember about the demonstration?

Y: Do you mean in June?

P Yes When they took the sailor

Y After that, I actually I do not remember too much other than people talking about it They were a little concerned They foresaw that trouble was coming They wanted to prepare for it That was all

P The sailor that they took up on stage, they did this because he was

against the Ku Klux Klan right?

Y Evidently, I suppose, yes

P What was a Klan demonstration like?

Y I never saw anything wrong other than the burning of the crosses up until this event here I never saw other than parading downtown They had banners

P How were they dressed?

Y Downtown? They had a good many men dressed in uniform, Klan uniforms

P With their heads covered?

Y Yes, heads covered I think that is what started all of the trouble when the people saw that, they greatly opposed that Some were not They all did not have uniforms

P What did the banners say?

Y I do not remember I did at one time, but I do not remember

P Did very many people come to watch the parades?

Y Yes There were people downtown There were a good many people watching

P What was the talk like? Did they yell or shout at the Klan?

Y I guess there was some of that going on What they said, I do not remember. That I do not remember. I do not remember that well.

P How big were the parades?

Y I would say they were a large sized parade It was nothing super, but they were starting to get larger as they went along and picked up momentum and increased in size

P Did they look scary or mysterious to you?

Y We were kids Naturally they would give you that impression

P Did any of them ever talk to you?

Y. No, never I never had a conversation with any of them

P Did you see the police very much during these parades?

Y No, we did not

P: Why

Y I do not know why, I never saw any of them around I could not tell you

P The talk of the town was one concern?

Y. Yes, it was I can remember the concern of the people They were very much disturbed by it

P Who were some of the people speaking out against the Klan the most? Is there anyone that you can mention or anyone whose name you would feel free?

Y I could not give you names There would be too many names I cannot single out one person

P Were most of them were Catholics?

Y I would say yes They were probably the most concerned. The Italians, Irish, foreigners were pretty much worried

P Do you remember any Protestants that might have been leaders on behalf of the immigrants? Protestants who were against the Klan?

Y. No, I never had that experience There may have been, but I cannot name them for you

P What role did the church play in all of this?

Y There was not much that the church could do They did back us up If we were steeped on and going to interfere with our religious worship, we were to defend ourselves at all costs That is the impression he gave us

P Who?

Y They never spoke it It never spoken out in church at the sermons There was very, very much concern

P Did they ever play any other roles in the affair here with the Klan?

Y Who is that?

P. The church

Y: We were instructed to defend ourselves That is all They were out to get us, I guess The pastors knew that

P Did you really feel that they were out to get you? Could you really feel that?

Y Yes, you could not help but feel it. That is the way you felt You could not help it It was the way they demonstrated

P The cross burning was the .

Y Why should they put that on me? What was it all about? It was something new and strange to us. What was it all about? Why was it necessary? That is what the people began to think. Why?

P Definitely convinced, then?

Y Yes They knew there was something in the air There was something brewing anyhow

P What other demonstrations or incidents before the riot, the big riot?

Y We had disturbances downtown

P Do you remember a night when the Klan raised a big cross across the street from the McKinley Memorial on Main Street? As soon as they lit it, somebody through a bomb at it?

Y I did not see that, but they talked about it I think there was another one It was across from the old city hall on State Street It is now present Niles Times Building It used to be KFP Hall Did you ever hear mention of that?

P Yes What was K of P? What did that mean? Was the Knight of Pitheas?

Y Yes

P. That was where the Klan used to have their Conclaves, their meets

Y. Right They had a cross lit up in front of all of the time right at the top part of the building That was the K of P

P What was the Knight of Pitheas?

Y I do not know too much about them, K of P is all I can remember. Are they not a bunch of the Masonic Club?

P It sounds like it might be I do not know What happened here? They did have a cross lit up here all of the time?

Y Yes

P They had lights on it?

Y I think they had lights

P On the roof?

Y Yes There was nothing wrong with that You would think it was a church if it were a church or something Those are the things that puzzled the people They seemed to be puzzled about that

P Can you remember any other incidents or events that might have occurred with the Klan before the riot?

Y One other one that I can remember was in the evening downtown about eight o'clock There was some shooting going on. I think that was in defiance to having trouble in the future They were concerned about a place, actually a poolroom, that sold sporting goods and firearms I think it was in defiance to that It was a possible available source of firearm to be used in the future

P What happened here with the shooting?

Y. The shooting went on for a short period of time than it ceased Whether they were order to stop, I do not know

P Who did the shooting? I do not want to know names

Y It was three individuals that shot in the air. It was not harm any one. It was just a matter of warning.

P Were the Catholics?

Y Yes, they were.

P In other words, they went in to show force more or less?

Y That is right. They did not want to do it to harm anybody, but it was just warning shots.

P Where did the shooting occur?

Y Downtown off of State Street.

P Was there any Klansmen nearby that could have heard it or seen it?

Y No, not that I know of. I do not think so. There was no one in sight.

P They just wanted the word to get out though?

Y That is it exactly.

P Was traffic heavy when these boys did this?

Y No, in those days, you have very little traffic. There was not that much traffic downtown.

P Were there a lot of people out that night?

Y No, not very many people out on the sidewalks and streets.

P About what time did it occur?

Y I think I mentioned it. It was around possibly eight o'clock in the evening.

P No policemen were around?

Y Not that I know of. We did not see any, at that particular time. They may have come on the scene shortly afterwards, but we did not see any. We

did not stick around

- P Was there any reaction on the Klan's part as to what occurred here that evening?
- Y In regard to that incident, I do not remember what was said or done about it I do not know.
- P What was the weather like that evening?
- Y: It was a nice evening out It was a nice summer evening as we would call it
- P Were there any episodes where the Klan might have gone through town shooting the place up?
- Y Not at that particular time I do not think I know of any There may have been I do not know I do not remember hearing or seeing of any Maybe somebody else did, but I did not I do not remember
- P Were there any other demonstrations up to the point where the riot occurred?
- Y No, not that I can remember
- P What did people think of Mayor Kistler at this time? What was his attitude toward this and what was the reaction of the people?
- Y A lot of people, although nobody could prove it and perhaps some people could, thought he was associated with the Klan
- P I have found that in writing I would imagine that he was not too of a popular person on the east end?
- Y No When they found that out, he was not too popular I think there was clear evidence that he was associated with them
- P Is there any evidence that any of the police officers might have been?
- Y Not that I know of.
- P Tell me about that day in October when the Klan did come in large numbers

Y In October, that is when trouble started to multiply They were on the upgrade, but I think they knew before hand that there was going to be a big parade or demonstration in Niles

P How did you know?

Y. In fact, it practically announced I do not know if it was announced through the papers or not, but word got around that they were going to have a big parade and they were going to bring in outsiders to parade with them

P. What was your reaction, personally, to that?

Y We were worried That had us worried We did not know what the outcome would be Everybody was out to defend themselves That was the only impression that it gave you People were worried Like we mentioned before, there was very, very, very much concern

P Did you think they were going to come through your neighborhood?

Y. Yes, we had that feeling too Yes, we did They came in during the middle of the night in secret in hiding and burnt crosses I do not think that they would hold back on much of anything else

P What did the church do?

Y I do not think the church got involved They did not get involved whatsoever We were cautioned about what to expect and to defend yourself at all costs They did not get involved

P Was there any desecration of the church?

Y Not that I know

P. You never heard of that?

Y No.

P The Jennings' told me that there was a rumor that the Klansmen were going to do the convent to attack the nuns Did you hear that?

Y I heard it We heard that. How true that was, I do not know

P Did any Klansmen come up and down your street in your neighborhood?

Y. No, I do not think so I never saw them before and I never saw them during the trouble either.

P In your neighborhood you never saw them?

Y. Yes

P Where were you that day? What did you do?

Y I was home Do you mean this particular November 1? I was home One of the older boys had a truck that hauled coal He said, "Let us go downtown and see the parade " I hopped in and went along with him even though I was worried It might be a peaceful parade I did not know We went downtown and there was no parade So we said, "Let's go out to Main Street Maybe they are organizing a parade " We got to the corner of Federal and Main Streets and there was quite a disturbance there The Klansmen were rushing to get up to North Road People there were trying to stop traffic from going through to prevent them from going to North Road I can remember that

Anyhow, we continue on to North Road. We said, "Maybe the parade is starting up there " We went on to North Road and what we saw before our eyes was unbelievable There was a line of Klansmen in robes on North Road as far as the eye could see We did not stay there We turned around and proceeded to go back down Main Street to go back downtown On coming back downtown, at the corner of Federal and Main that is where the GE (General Electric) is, there was quite a commotion and disturbance The cars with Klansmen in them were still trying to go up North Main Street There were also people trying to stop them I think some shooting went on at the time too There was shooting from both sides

P The Kaln was trying to get to where when they were at the GE?

Y. They were proceeding North up North Main Street

P To get to North Road?

Y. Yes, they were already assembled up at North Road

P I thought that they had tried to assemble by the steel mill on North Main

Y Republic Steel?

- P. Yes
- Y That is the place that I am talking about This is the beginning of North Road They did not assemble in front of Republic Steel. It was on North Road itself which is across from Republic Steel
- P I am thinking where Potomac Street is and Camrose is going out towards Route 422
- Y No North Road You go up North Main and turn off of on to North Road That is where they were assembling from the beginning of North Road on down
- P On towards the steel mill?
- Y No, right on North Road
- P Towards Route 422
- Y The steel mill is on Main Street
- P There on North Road towards Route 422?
- Y That is right They were going to assemble there and continue to march on downtown come down Main Street and march downtown
- P Had they used that field at all by the steel mill? To assemble the night before? Did they have a bivouac there?
- Y I do not know That was as far as I ever went I remember going that far and seeing anything That is as much as I can remember up there The parade never got started
- P Tell me some more about North Road How many would you estimate? Thousands? Hundreds?
- Y We were not there that long. We saw that and made an about face and went on back. We did not stop to investigate or look We just went there to really see a parade I knew it was a long line
- P How many abreast in the line?
- Y They were just starting to line up They were commencing to line up I

could have been two abreast. They were size crowd.

P Were they off to the side of the road or in the middle of the road?

Y Like I explained, some were already assembling on the road and some were commencing to fall into the line. I would imagine that there were a lot of outsiders there. We proceeded and went out to the corner of Main. That is where the big disturbance was. It was to the corner of Main and Federal Streets. That is where all of the shooting took place.

P How many people were in that truck with you?

Y It was just the two of us. We had just gone for a ride.

P You got off of the truck at Main Street? Where did you get off the truck at?

Y He was stopped and I got off of the truck. I continued to walk on down Main Street as far as the Erie Railroad track. My intentions were to get home. Looking on down the railroad track up and down the track, there were railroad police officers and detectives. I saw them and passenger train loads were stopped. They were advised not to proceed. There were more people on there that were to get off the train and to join the parade.

P For the Klan?

Y Yes. The trains were stopped. They would not let them proceed. You could see train load up above. I came on down home. That is where I stayed. I stayed put.

P When you saw the action at the corner of Federal and Main Streets, what did you see? How many people were there?

Y There were quite a few people there.

P Was it jammed packed?

Y No, I would not say jammed packed. I would say one hundred or two hundred people anyhow.

P Were the Catholics out numbered?

Y Heavily. Yes. Heavily out numbered.

P What was going on

Y Like I described to you that they were trying to get up to join the parade I assume They were attempting to stop them from proceeding to North Main Street

P Were these Klansmen coming from South Main Street?

Y They were coming probably from South Main Street, yes

P Were they actually fighting it out?

Y Where they were coming from, I do not know They were in cars

P Were they swinging at each other or fighting? Were they actually hitting each other?

Y No They were in cars Some were trying to stop the cars from going on up Main, there may have been some fist fighting We did not stop because I was in the truck and we went on up We did not stop They let us through Perhaps they knew us

P How did they stop the cars? Did you see any shooting at the intersection with your eyes?

Y I heard shots I did not see anything whoever was doing the shooting I do not know They were in the crowd They were trying to prevent the cars, more or less to scare them from going on, but they went on though I did not see anyone injured or anything From what I heard, there were several people injured or anything From what I heard, there were several people injured even some of the people who were standing around trying to stop the cars from going through They were shot?

P Some of the Catholics were shot?

Y. Oh, yes One of them in the law.

P. One in the law?

Y. One was in the foot

P Do you remember those people?

Y No, I do not remember I remember talking about it

P How many cars were there that were trying to come in?

Y I was not there that long

P I mean, were they coming in one at a time or a whole parade of them?

Y They were coming in from all directions Some coming in from probably Robbins Avenue on down and up Federal to Main and some coming from South Main They were coming in from different places

P Was there a lot of shouting?

Y Yes, there was quite a bit of shouting

P What was being said,?

Y I do not know "Stop" They have them warning signs and the idea was to stop them from proceeding and getting through there. They wanted them to turn around and go back

P Were these people in the cars wearing Klan uniforms?

Y Yes, they were. I can remember one incident that I mentioned to you about the track and walked on home down the railroad track. A car stopped here at the corner

P What corner?

Y It was along the east side here somewhere. I think they had a load of Klan uniforms that they took away from it They stopped this one car I think they took every uniform that they had They were probably going to take them up to North Main I assume that is where they got them They had a car load of uniforms Did you ever hear of that one?

P Was it Jennings that had the robes tied to his bumper?

Y That could have been I did not see that

P It was like a trophy to these people To confiscate a robe was a trophy in other words. Was that the way they see it?

- Y I do not think they wanted to keep them They just did not want them to get in parade
- P Yes
- Y They were taken from cars
- P Was there an altercation at all in McKinley Heights?
- Y In McKinley Heights? I do not know about McKinley Heights
- P Tell me about the flaming circle
- Y All I can tell you about it is what I have heard I never saw any of them come in here It is something that I think was organized in Steubenville, Ohio. It was a counter of the Ku Klux Klan It would keep in bounds It was originally organized in Steubenville, Ohio It gradually spread here They heard about the big parade that was going to take place here I think they were stopped in a parade at Steubenville, Ohio too
- P. The Klan?
- Y Yes They were going to make an attempt here in Niles They set that as their next goal I guess the boys got in contact with Niles and told them what to prepare for and what to look for That is as much as we knew about it That was the day of the big parade, November 1, 1924 The Flaming Circle was pretty well organized In Niles, I think it was pretty well organized at that time.
- P What was the feeling of the neighborhood that day as the rioting was going on downtown?
- Y I saw a lot of tears that day Everybody was very much worried Anything could happen Anything could flare up in a situation like that and it could become very serious A little spark let go and you do not know what the eventualities will be They were very much worried The neighborhood was concerned about it
- P Do you think that any of them were confused what America was?
- Y Yes. They began to get confused. Maybe they were not before but they were becoming more so They were good people I do not know why They worked with a lot of these people They worked together in the mills

and factories. They worked side by side and to have that feeling exist. I saw good friends become separated on account of that for no reason.

P After the riot?

Y During the riot. Even during this trouble I saw close friends become separated. Why? Over nothing.

P What did you think when the troops came in?

Y What was another thing? They city could not handle the problem. It became out of hand. Even the Trumbull County Sheriff during the time. I do not remember. It could have been Smith.

P Thomas or Smith?

Y It was Smith or Thomas. I do not know. I think it was Smith. He brought in the militaries and saved the day. He brought in the militia immediately. They were here in no time at all. They set up vantage points at each corner in the neighborhoods, had four or five militiamen. They were there for several days, 24 hours a day. People were not permitted to congregate or gather anywhere out in any public place or street corner. You could at home, but you were not allowed to gather and congregate. We happened to be at a wedding one time right at the corner. They broke up the wedding. They said we had to go to Girard and finish up the dinner.

P What were the Niles police doing during the riot? Did you see them at all?

Y For a handful of police, that was too much to handle. They tried to cover what they were able to, but of course, they had close friends on both sides. They tried to make peace, but they just could not handle the problem. I could not see where they could handle it. They had to have outside help. It became too big.

P How long did it take before the hard feelings between Catholics and the Ku Klux Klan people die down?

Y. It took some time. It just took time. It is just like anything else. Time is the best healer. They eventually got over it. Those were things that I did not think were brought on by themselves. It was things that were brought into town by somebody else. It was not that they created the problem themselves. That was the sad part of it. They eventually overcame it.

P We have had several mayors in the community. Among these mayors, you see a list in front of you now, who were those that you thought were among the best?

Y It is a difficult thing to pick them out, I can pick out a few that I thought were very capable mayors. As a youngster, I always like Charlie Crow because he was good to the young people. It was very sports minded. We loved sports and he went along with us. In that respect, I think he did a lot to establish something for the youth of this town. He was very popular in general. Mayor Ferguson. I worked for Mayor Ferguson in his drugstore when I first came out of college. When he became mayor, I became a pharmacist in his store.

P What years?

Y 1935.

P 1932 to 1935 he was the mayor.

Y Yes. I worked in his drugstore.

P What kind of person was he?

Y He had a very nice personality. He would go all out to give you assistance. Any help that you wanted, he was there. He had a very pleasing personality. I enjoyed being with him on many occasions. William Carney. I knew William Carney. He is a hard worker. He did a lot for the city. Elmer Fisher. I can pick out that Elmer Fisher was a good mayor. Ed Lennney, Tom Smith, and of course Carmen DeChristefero all worked hard, I think. If you had any suggestions or ideas or some assistance, they worked to the best of their ability to help you out on problems. We always looked forward to that. If you needed assistance and a situation came up many a times, you approached them and they were willing to help you. Those were my favorite mayors. Of course the others would fall in line, too, but all of these, these are the ones that I would mention first.

P Do you remember any police chiefs before Ross?

Y The first police chief that I can remember is Nick Rounds.

P What kind of guy was he?

- Y To look at Nick Rounds, he seemed a very stern personality which he was. He was very dedicated to his job. We were younger kids at the time he was police chief. He was very strict and concerned not only with the police but the townspeople in general. I remember him as a very good police chief.
- I think Berline, Charlie Berline, came after Nick Rounds. He was a very capable police chief. He was followed by John Ross. I knew John all my life. He was more of our classification and age. I knew him a little more personally than I did the others. Those three are all that I can remember. I respected all three of them. They were all good men.
- P What can you remember about the bootlegging days? What was the east end like?
- Y In the 1930's everybody had to struggle for a living so no matter if it was steel or coal or bootlegging. I can remember bootlegging. I knew people who tried it anyhow. Some got away with it and some did not. They made their own moonshine.
- P Many people told me that Jennings' had the best liquor in the area, not only in Niles, but in the entire area.
- Y They did not make their liquor. They probably bought in from bootleggers. They did not make it. They had a good reputation for good liquor. It was a good brand.
- P Did you ever hear of a place called Louie the Owl's?
- Y Oh, yes, Louie the Owl's was a very popular place. It was well liked. Louie the Owl was a very fine person even though he sold the beer in buckets. We called it home brew. Louie the Owl was very popular in his day. There were a good many others besides.
- P Where was Louie the Owl? On Main Street or Mason Street rather?
- Y He had several places. I can remember one place. I think it was at the end of Scott Street. He had several places though. He used to be in other areas perhaps Pratt Street and somewhere through there. That is about as much as I can remember.
- P. What are some of the other areas that were popular maybe? Louie the Owl's, Jennings', any other places?

- Y. No, no I do not. I did not frequent those places too much. I can remember Jennings', Louie the Owl and we had another place called the Black House.
- P. I have heard of that place.
- Y. It is no longer. They tore that down. It was at the end of Langley Street.
- P. Why was it called, the Black House?
- Y. Because the house was just unpainted. Then you had several places on East Park Avenue. One was called the Chicken Market.
- P. Why was that?
- Y. I do not know. They formerly sold chickens. It was sort of a meet market and chicken market. There were quite a few places along at the extreme end of East Park Avenue and Grant Street. They had a lot of places along in there. I never went to those places.
- P. Did you ever have the opportunity to go into Jennings' at all?
- Y. Yes. Of course we had our Gym. I played football with him. We had the gym right along side of the building. We had a gymnasium where the fighters trained. Of course we dressed up in uniforms to play football in the gym.
- P. Was the gym separate?
- Y. Yes, it was a separate building the building along side of it.
- P. There is a parking lot along side of it there now.
- Y. Yes. Of course they have enlarged it now and made it a large building. They had a gym right along side of the present corner building. That was where the fighters trained and we had lockers and locker rooms, and showers where we changed before the games and undressed after the games.
- P. What was a speak easy like inside?
- Y. They had a bar just like an ordinary barroom. You never did see any liquor. There was none in sight.

- P How did they hide it?
- Y That was a secret to themselves only. If you bought a drink, I guess out came the bottle. That was known to them only. They would tell you where they put it. They did not have a display of bottles. Do not get that impression. There was one bottle.
- P I have heard people say they were able to hide in the walls.
- Y That is what I say. It was no problem of hiding it. One or two bottles could be easily disposed of. In case they were raided, they could readily dispose of. It was just one or two bottles I think. Of course, they were refilled from time to time. If they made a sole over the bar to take out, it was sold in pop bottles. You bought it by the pop bottle. It was \$1.00 pop bottle.
- P What did you ever possibly hear of the "black hand"? Did you ever know of their existence or hear of their existence?
- Y They talked about it when I was a kid, yes. We were small children then. It existed. It was here. That was another worry too.
- P I heard that Jennings' kept it under control. He kind of pushed them out?
- Y Right. I think yes. They were a little worried about that. They were organized probably before I was born. They were still here when I was just a youngster. I did not know any of them. If they were, I did not know who they were.
- P What types of things did the Black Hand do to people?
- Y They tried to bleed them for money or whatever they could get their hands on. I think finances, principle money, if they could squeeze it out of them.
- P Did they help people in any way?
- Y Not that I know of. We never got any assistance.
- P When did they fade away?
- Y I will tell you one thing, if we had Black hands in here they drifted in here.
- P From out of town?

- Y. From out of town They probably came in from the bigger cities like Chicago, Cleveland, New York, and Brooklyn They drifted in here. Some of the boys here got the idea that we can group together and start something too They were behind the boys from the big city I did not know any of them
- P Let me ask you this if I have it right Tell me if I am accurate. By the 1930's the Black Hand was really out-of-towners who may have come in and had the chance or organizing things
- Y I would say a good many of the majority, were trying to organize in here They would be under their surveillance
- P Under whose surveillance?
- Y The boys that came in had the controlling interests, the boys that came in from the big city.
- P. They wanted to have the control?
- Y They were under their command
- P The black hands who came into town were controlled by other people outside of town
- Y Sure
- P Those Black Handers who lived in Niles around 1910 or 1915 were gone by now in other words, most of them
- Y Oh, yes, definitely They were gone
- P By this time, places like Jennings' or other bootleggers by the late 1930's especially probably began to become stronger and form a nucleus where they controlled things a little more in town than they had a decade earlier Am I right?
- Y. Yes That is about all I can remember about that
- P. Did you remember anything about the incident where Marty Flask was murdered? Is there anything that you want to talk about?
- Y No, I do not think that.

P Is there anything else that you would like to add to this?

Y That is about all. If there are other things that you wanted to talk about, I do not know.

P Not right now.

Y As far as that is concerned that is as much as my memory tells me.

P Fine. Thank you very much.

End of Interview